

Study Guide for Teachers

MIKATA

Rhythmic Expedition
K-12



Young
Audiences
Arts for
Learning
Connecticut

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Powerful rhythmic music and dance carry you to the cultures of Nigeria, Ghana, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Jamaica, Dominican Republic and the U.S. Mikata: means 'all of us' in the Ewe language of Ghana. And Mikata invites all of you on a musical journey from West Africa to the Caribbean and Brazil. Winners of two state-wide awards for their contribution to the arts, Mikata has performed at over 500 public schools, festivals, colleges and universities around the country.

Mikata will make your pulse quicken as you chant, clap and dance to powerful rhythms from Ghana, Nigeria, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti and Brazil. Garbed in colorful costumes, Mikata performs on an array of authentic drums, bells, rattles, flutes and xylophones.



Members of MIKATA are: (l-r) Edwin Cedeño, Richard Hill, Dante Hall and Asher DeLorme.

Our objective is to give students an understanding of Africa's strong links to the cultures of the U.S., the Caribbean and South America.

Richard Hill, Founder/Director

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mikata, based in New Haven, CT, has been performing traditional African and neo-African music nationally and internationally since 1980. The group performs traditional music from West and Central Africa, the Caribbean and Brazil and also performs original music with an African/Latin groove and a strong message of social justice.

Richard Hill (founder, MA African Studies) has researched and taught African music and culture for over twenty years. He did extensive field work in Ghana and in Haiti and has continued his research in this country with traditional musicians and dancers from Africa, the Caribbean and Brazil. He taught at Yale University, City College of New York, the New School for Social Research, ACES Educational Center for the Arts, Hopkins School and the University of Bridgeport

Before the program:

Research the following musical instruments:

- Axatse
- Gankogui
- Shekere
- Atsimevu
- Donno or Talking Drum

Match the names and descriptions with the photos on page 2.

Discuss:

Are any of these instruments similar to instruments you are familiar with?

VOCABULARY:

Popular music-- Music accessible to a wide audience, distributed through the mass media as a commercial product. It tends to be associated with urban rather than rural cultures, and is performed by professional musicians.

Jazz--An eclectic, expanding collection of 20th-century styles of American origin, owing much to both black and white American musical cultures. It is more dependent on group improvisation and spontaneity than classical music, which is fixed in a written score. Instrumental ensembles tend to emphasize winds more than strings, and many pieces take the form of a series of variations a chord progression derived from a popular song.

Spiritual--A religious song used in English-speaking "free churches," especially in the United States, close to the style of popular music in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Related types were cultivated by both whites and blacks throughout the 19th century and into the 20th.

Gospel Music--The successor to spirituals, consisting of religious songs close to the style of late-nineteenth-century popular music. As with the spiritual, there are both white and black varieties.

Rhythmic Polyphony--The simultaneous use of two or more contrasting rhythms. It is a common element in African and African-American music. Polyrythms often mimic the 'call and response' element of West African music that has translated through to one of the unique characteristics of American Gospel Music.

CURRICULAR LINKS

Connecticut State Department of Education

Source: The CT Framework – K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards –

Music

Standard 1: Vocal
Students will sing music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed.

Standard 2: Instrumental
Students will echo short rhythms and melodic patterns

Dance

Standard 1: Elements and Skills
Students will demonstrate rhythmic acuity and musicality; Students will identify and perform basic dance steps, positions and patterns for dance from two different styles or traditions, demonstrating clarity and stylistic accuracy

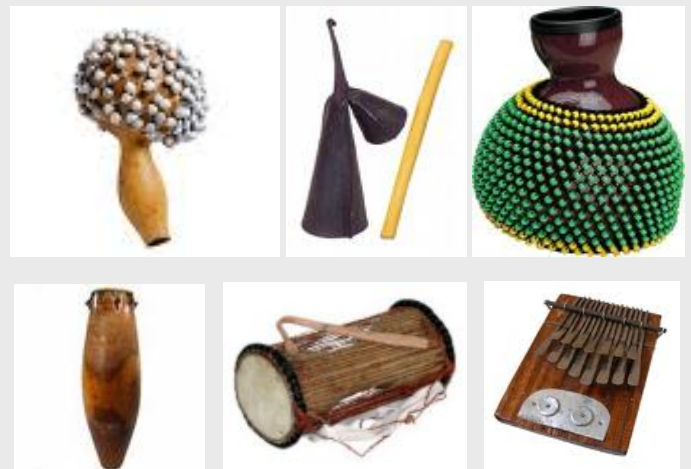
RESOURCES

BOOKS/INTERNET:

Bascom, W.R. and J.J. Herskovits. *Continuity and Change in African Cultures*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959

Bebey, Francis, *African Music, A people's Art*. Westport: Lawrence Hill and Co. 1975

Dietz, Betty and M.B. Olatunji, *Musical Instruments of Africa*. New York: John Day 1965



AFTER THE PROGRAM:

Discuss:

- Are there other cultures and cultural traditions that can be traced back to historic origins that are in another country or on another continent?
- Can you create a polyrhythm?
- What was the talking drum used for?

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